

LINCOLN LORE

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WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN PARALLELS

No two names in American history are more often associated than those of Washington and Lincoln. When you hear one name pronounced, you expect to hear the other in almost the same breath. When you see the portrait of one, you expect to see a profile of the other facing it.

It would appear as if the "trademark" of our democracy might be a seal displaying the pictures of these American heroes. We call one the "Father of the Country" and the other the "Savior of the Country."

Possibly it is not so strange that Washington and Lincoln had many interests in common and that they more or less followed the same general course as they grew into manhood. As an aftermath of the Lincoln and Washington celebrations in February, it is timely to call attention to some of these parallels.

English Ancestry

The ancestry of George Washington was of English origin and his first American ancestor settled in Virginia in 1657. Abraham Lincoln's first American progenitor arrived in Massachusetts in 1637, twenty years previous to the coming of the Washingtons. Both families were in America, however, in early colonial days.

Parental Relations

When Washington was but ten years of age, his father passed away. Lincoln suffered the loss of his mother when he was but nine years of age. It might also be noted that both Washington's father and Lincoln's father were married twice.

Birthdays

The best known Washington and Lincoln coincidence is the fact that their birthdays occurred in February. The period between February 12 and February 22 has now become somewhat of a Festival of Patriotism, and more emphasis is being placed on this interval each year.

Early Schooling

Lincoln attended five different subscription schools which gave him a primary education not unlike that of Washington who attended school irregularly. Both men were denied any university training.

Character

Although debunkers have attempted to throw out the story of George Washington's father's attempt to teach his son to be honest, the symbol of truth somehow clings to him. It is very likely that we would not have had an "Honest Abe" if Lincoln had not as a boy become familiar with the story of Washington's integrity.

Mathematics

If one can think of a youth outside the schools of higher learning specializing in any certain subject, it can be conceived that Washington majored in mathematics in which he became greatly interested and very proficient. The instructor who taught Lincoln the fundamentals in mathematics has left us testimony about his ability in this field of effort. Lincoln later taught himself to master algebra, plain and solid geometry, trigonometry, and the high branches of mathematics in Euclid.

Athletics

Weems, in his *Life of George Washington*, places much emphasis on Washington's athletic ability, especially with reference to his running and jumping, but Lincoln was the outstanding athlete of all the Presidents. Standing six feet four inches tall, three inches taller than Washington, he is said to have weighed over two hundred pounds when he left Indiana at twenty-one years of age. He was the champion strong man of the countryside.

Surveying

We best know Washington in his early life as a surveyor. We read of his exploits in the wilderness and his survey of the tracts of land of Lord

Fairfax. Lincoln also became an expert surveyor and many small towns in Illinois were laid out by him, as well as large tracts on the prairies.

Early Military Service

It would appear that Washington as a very young man took an interest in military affairs and soon became actively engaged as an officer of militia. As early as his twenty-third year Lincoln enlisted in the Black Hawk War and was made a captain of the volunteer company which he joined.

Presidency

Washington, as the first President of the nation, drew to himself such a multitude of admirers that he was elected to the President's chair for a second term. Lincoln also was twice elected to the Presidency.

Commander-in-Chief

Possibly Washington's greatest distinction was his military leadership which was largely responsible for our American independence. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Abraham Lincoln by virtue of his office as President also held this position during the civil strife, and although he may not have distinguished himself on the field of battle, his diplomacy and wise leadership contributed much to the winning of the war by the North and the preservation of the Union.

Patriotism

After all has been said with reference to various similarities which have been observed in the lives of Washington and Lincoln, the most important parallel is their love of country. It would seem that in most every situation they saw eye to eye so far as the future of the nation was concerned, and this was especially true with respect to our foreign relations. One has but to read Washington's "Farewell Address" and Lincoln's messages to Congress to see how anxious both were to keep out of foreign entanglements.